

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4872

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: OPTIMISM ON SETTLEMENT, AHTISAARI INTERVIEW

1. AUGUST 21 PRESS REPORTS LAY HEAVY STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF FINAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE,
MARTTI AHTISAARI, AND ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL, JUSTICE
STEYN. NONETHELESS, CORRESPONDENT DAVID JACKSON, SAYS IN
THE CITIZEN THAT "INFORMED SOURCES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN

CONTINGENT" TOLD HIM, "YOU CAN TAKE IT THAT A SETTLEMENT IS
IN THE AIR."

2. JACKSON STATES THAT INDEPENDENCE AND ELECTION DATES ARE
STILL BEING DISCUSSED, BUT THAT "IT NEED NOT BE AN
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INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE." THE CITIZEN REPORTS THE UN TEAM
TO BE IMPRESSED WITH THE "LEGALITY" OF THE REGISTRATION
SYSTEM, ABDOU CISS OF SENEGAL, CHARGED WITH THE REFUGEE
ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM, REPORTEDLY FEELS REENTRY POINTS HE
INSPECTED ON THE BORDER " COULD BE SATISFACTORY" AND HE IS
"OPTIMISTIC" THAT REFUGEE RECEPTION CENTERS COULD BE SET UP
AT GROOTFONTEIN, TSUMEB, AND PERHAPS WINDHOEK.

3. THE CITIZEN SAYS MOST "ANALYSTS IN WINDHOEK"

EXPECT A DELAYED ELECTION FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY: ANYWHERE FROM APRIL TO JULY IS BEING SUGGESTED. THE PAPER REPORTS UN CONCERN THAT THERE IS NO OFFICIAL OUTLET FOR SWAPO VIEWS IN THE COMMUNICATION MEDIA, AND SAYS SOME CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A UN SUPERVISED PUBLICATION OR RADIO STATION.

4. THE STAR PUBLISHED AUGUST 19 AN "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW"

WITH AHTISAARI AND, THOUGH NOTING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE PINNED DOWN ON AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF THE FIVE SINITIATIVE, STATED THAT HE GAVE AN IMPRESSION OF "RESTRAINED OPTIMISM" THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. DURING THE INTERVIEWS, AHTISAARI REPORTEDLY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF STEP-BY-STEP ADHERENCE TO THE UN PROPOSALS, DOUBTING THAT ANY STEPS COULD BE CONTRACTED OR SPEEDED UP. THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT, GIVEN THE PLAN'S CALL FOR A THREE MONTH SA PHASED TROOP REDUCTION AND A FOUR MONTH ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO FOLLOW, ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ORIGINAL DECEMBER 31 TARGET DATE WOULD BE APPARENTLY IMPOSSIBLE. AHTISSARI MADE NO SUCH CONCLUSION, HOWEVER.

5. HE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT THE SIZE OF THE
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UNTAG COULD BE DIFFERENT FROM THE 1,000 CIVILIAN AND 5,000 TROOPS ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND TASKS REQUIRED WILL DETERMINE THE FINAL FIGURES. HE ONCE MORE REPEATED HIS CALL FOR IMPARTIALITY ON ALL SIDES. CONCERNING HIS PLAN TO LEAVE ALMOST HALF THE UN TEAM BEHIND WHEN HE RETURNS TO NEW YORK, AHTISAARI SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO OBJECTION THUS FAR FROM SOUTH AFRICA. THE REMAINING TEAM MEMBERS WILL CONTINUE TO COLLECT INFORMATION AND WILL BE READY FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION SHOULD THE INITIATIVE PASS THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL.
EDMONDSON

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